

REMARKS

Claim 1 is pending in this application. No amendment has been made in this Response.

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to (Office action point 1).

The Examiner states that the abstract has two paragraphs. However, in the Amendment of August 8, 2002, Applicants have already amended the abstract to be one paragraph in response to the previous objection to the disclosure.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Libretti (U.S. Patent No. 5,187,431) (Office action point 3).

The rejection of claim 1 is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has taken Libretti's male contacts 6 as the recited "vertical probes", which are "probes drooping vertically", of claim 1. The Examiner indicates that Libretti's reference numeral 21 corresponds to the recited "main substrate". (Applicants note that reference numeral 21, appearing as a dashed region in Fig. 1, does not appear to be explained in Libretti's specification.) The Examiner has also taken top surface of card 10, probe card 3, card carrier 1 and support structure 2 as the recited "probe support", assigning top surface 10 as the "upper guide plate", and probe card 3 as the "lower guide plate".

In traversing the rejection, Applicants first note that Libretti's male contacts (or male contact pins) 6 "are set into a circular channel formed by the two concentrically spaced vertical walls 6b and

6b' of an annular body of an insulating material. The stems 6a of the male contact pins 6 emerge from the bottom surface of the probe card 3 and are soldered to a respective conductive track of the printed circuit card" (column 4, lines 41-47). This detail can be seen in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4 of Libretti, and it is clear that the tops of male contacts 6 occur below the line II-II in Fig. 1, that is, just above probe card 3 and far below top surface 10.

Therefore, Libretti's male contacts 6 "droop" only from stem 6 in vertical walls 6b, 6b', which cannot be considered to be a main substrate. Libretti's probe card 3 would therefore be somewhat analogous to the recited lower guide plate, but Libretti has no elements meeting the limitations of the recited upper guide plate or main substrate in claim 1, since the probes must droop vertically from the main substrate and must pass through holes in the upper guide plate. Libretti's apparatus is therefore clearly inconsistent with the recitation of claim 1.

Applicants further respectfully disagree with the Examiner that probe card 3 in Libretti is "composed of a plurality of substrates laminated separably". In Libretti, probes 5 are provided under an EWS probe card 3 for establishing contact with a wafer. In Libretti's configuration, if the lowest layer of the probe card 3 is peeled off as discussed in the present application, probes 5 will be removed together with the lowest layer from the probe card 3. That is, the probe card 3 in Libretti is not made of layers laminated separably, since separation would destroy Libretti's device.

Therefore, the invention of the present application cannot be anticipated by Libretti.

Response under 37 CFR 1.111
Masao OKUBO et al.


U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/851,946
Attorney Docket No. 010609

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants undersigned agent at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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